

Amendment and Response
Applicants: Franco Vallana et al.
Serial No.: 10/790,649

Attorney Docket No.: SBC1025USC1

REMARKS

Claims 1 to 31 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 29 and 31 have been amended. Support for the amendment can be found in various places throughout the specification and in FIGS. 1 to 4. No new matter has been added by this amendment.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 14 to 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. In particular, the Examiner states that there is no mention in the specification for the newly added limitation of "at a zero point of the sinusoidal shape of the annular element and a second end...at a zero point". Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of the claims.

Applicants' specification clearly supports the above mentioned limitation. In particular, support can be found in the drawings, specifically FIGS. 1 to 4, and in the specification on page 7, lines 17 to 23 which states that the connection members 3 are connected to the cylindrical elements 2 (the annular elements) at the "0" (zero) points of the respective sinusoidal paths (the sinusoidal shape). Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 14 to 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1 to 4, 7 to 19, and 22 to 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6, 758,859 ("Dang") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,193,747 ("von Oepen"). Claims 5, 6, 20, and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Dang in view of von Oepen in further view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 20010029351 ("Falotico").

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Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of the claims for at least the same reasons previously set forth in Applicants' Response filed November 18, 2005. Specifically, neither Dang in view of von Oepen nor Dang in view of von Oepen in further view of Falotico suggest or render obvious the present claimed invention. Each of the independent claims will be separately addressed.

Independent Claim 1

Applicants respectfully submit that Dang does not disclose or teach the claimed invention. Claim 1, as amended, requires that each connection element have a curved portion positioned between first and second rectilinear portions. Dang does not suggest or render obvious a connection element that has first and second rectilinear portions and a curved portion positioned therebetween. Dang discloses a rectilinear connection element in all of the drawings. At col. 3, lines 60 to 64, Dang provides that "the interconnecting elements 24 may also have a variety of shapes and patterns including, but not limited to, circular, oval, straight, curved, etc." Thus, Dang expresses no particular preference as to the shape of the interconnecting elements. More particularly, Dang does not teach nor suggest that the connection element should have a shape which combines a curved portion between first and second rectilinear portions. Further, there is no motivation or reason for a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify Dang by replacing the rectilinear interconnecting elements which are included in all of the disclosed embodiments with connecting elements having both a rectilinear portion and a curved portion. Motivation for such a modification is not provided by Dang, which, as stated before, discloses only rectilinear interconnecting elements and, although other shapes may be acknowledged, expresses no preference for what those shapes may be. Even more specifically, Dang contains no suggestion or motivation to use a connection element having any particular combination of shapes and certainly not a connection element having a curved portion positioned

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between first and second rectilinear portions. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Dang in view of von Oepen be withdrawn.

Claims 2 to 13 depend from claim 1 which Applicants believe is allowable for the reasons stated above. Since dependent claims 2 to 13 add further limitations to claim 1, Applicants believe that dependent claims 2 to 13 are allowable.

Independent Claim 14

Claim 14 requires that each connection element have a first end connected to an annular element at a zero point of the sinusoidal shape of the annular element and a second end connected to an adjacent annular element at a zero point of the sinusoidal shape of the adjacent annular element. Neither Dang nor von Oepen has this structure. The connecting elements of Dang and von Oepen are connected between peaks and valleys of the sinusoidal annular elements.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Dang in view of von Oepen be withdrawn.

Claims 15 to 28 depend from claim 14 which Applicants believe is allowable for the reasons stated above. Since dependent claims 15 to 28 add further limitations to claim 14, Applicants believe that dependent claims 15 to 28 are allowable.

Independent Claims 29 and 31

Claims 29 and 31 have been amended to require that the connection elements have a curved portion positioned between first and second rectilinear portions. Dang does not suggest or render obvious such a connection element for the reasons set forth in connection with claim 1 which are equally applicable to amended claims 29 and 31.

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Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 29 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Dang in view of von Oepen be withdrawn.

Claim 30 depends from claim 29 which Applicants believe is allowable for the reasons stated above. Since dependent claim 30 adds further limitations to claim 29, Applicants believe that dependent claim 30 is allowable.

Conclusion

In view of Applicants' amendments and remarks, the claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections, and passage of the case to issue is respectfully requested.

If any additional fees are due in connection with the filing of this paper, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 16-2312. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 4/17/06

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